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72. Hivelitor			Osamu ¹ Inoue Minami Ibaraki Plant, Nihon Mectron Co., Ltd. ² 757 Amaboki, Kukizaki-machi, Inashiki-gun, Ibaraki-ken				
72. Inventor			Akira³ Tadakuma Minami Ibaraki Plant, Nihon Mectron Co., Ltd.⁴ 757 Amaboki, Kukizaki-machi, Inashiki-gun, Ibaraki-ken				
Minam				kashi⁴ Mori inami Ibaraki Plant, Nihon Mectron Co., Ltd.⁴ 7 Amaboki, Kukizaki-machi, Inashiki-gun, Ibaraki-ken			
M			Naoyuki ⁵ Maida Minami Ibaraki Plant, Nihon Mectron Co., Ltd.* 757 Amaboki, Kukizaki-machi, Inashiki-gun, Ibaraki-ken				
/ 1. 1 pp. tour.			-	Nihon Mectron Co., Ltd.* 1-12-15 Shiba Daimon, Minato-ku, Tokyo			
74. Agent			Akimitsu Kamata, Patent Attorney				

Specification

1. Title of the Invention

Electrophoretic Display Device

2. Claims of Patent

(1) An electrophoretic display device wherein the space between a pair of opposing electrode plates at least one of which is transparent is filled with a disperse system containing electrophoretic particles, and the state of distribution of the electrophoretic particles in the disperse system is changed under the action of a display-

⁵ ILS Note – Alternative ways of reading this personal name are Takashi and Hisayuki.



¹ ILS Note - An alternative way of reading this personal name is Shu.

² ILS Note - Despite an exhaustive search of available resources, we were unable to verify the Official company name. Phonetic translation is provided. Hereafter denoted as *.

³ ILS Note – Alternative ways of reading this personal name are Akashi, Sho, and Teru.

⁴ ILS Note – An alternative way of reading this personal name is Koshi.

controlling voltage applied across said electrodes in order to change the optical reflection properties and thereby to induce a specific display operation; in which are provided numerous microcapsules filled with a disperse system in which is dispersed, in a colored dispersion medium, at least one kind of electrophoretic particles the optical characteristics of which differ from those of said dispersion medium; with said device configured such that these microcapsules are arranged between the abovementioned electrode plates.

(2) An electrophoretic display device of Claim (1) of the present invention, wherein the volume resistivities of the abovementioned disperse system and microcapsules are for practical purposes the same.

3. Detailed Explanation of the Invention

(Field of Industrial Application)

The present invention concerns a display device utilizing electrophoretic particles; more precisely, it concerns an electrophoretic display device in which individual microcapsules are filled with a disperse system in which electrophoretic particles are dispersed in a dispersion medium, and these microcapsules are placed in the space between electrode plates.

(Prior Art and Problems Therewith)

In this type of electrophoretic display device using electrophoretic particles, the space between a pair of opposing electrode plates at least one of which is transparent is filled with a disperse system in which electrophoretic particles are dispersed in a liquid dispersion medium, and the electrophoretic particles in the dispersion medium are made to adhere to or be repelled from the transparent electrode plate side according to the polarity of said electrode plates, so that by controlling said polarity, any desired characters, symbols or figures can be displayed. As the liquid dispersion medium used in the disperse system, an alcohol solvent, various esters, aliphatichydrocarbons, alicyclic hydrocarbons, aromatic hydrocarbons, halogenated hydrocarbons, or various other hydrocarbons may be used either individually or in an appropriate mixture, with a surfactant added in an appropriate quantity. As the electrophoretic particles, carbon black, iron blue⁶, phthalocyanine green, and other materials are known as general-use materials.

Figure 2 is a conceptual cross-sectional diagram of the main components of the electrophoretic display device in question. Here 1 and 2 are respectively glass sheets or some other transparent material, and transparent electrodes formed in the required pattern on one side; the space between this pair of transparent electrodes 2, placed to oppose each other, is filled with a disperse system 10 containing electrophoretic particles. In a construction in which the disperse system 10 simply fills the space between the electrodes, coagulation of the electrophoretic particles and adhesion phenomena may cause display unevenness; as methods of preventing such occurrences, constructions are known in which mesh-shaped spacers 7 9 with numerous holes of an appropriate shape 9A as shown in Fig. 3, or perforated spacers 9 with numerous penetrating holes, are placed between the two electrodes 2, in order to divide the disperse system 10 into discontinuous areas and thereby stabilize the display operation.

In an electrophoretic display device provided with said perforated spacers 9, after placing said perforated spacers 9 between both transparent electrodes 2, each of the penetrating holes 9A formed in the perforated spacer 9 is filled with the disperse system 10; however, it is extremely difficult to uniformly fill the numerous penetrating holes 9A with the disperse system 10. One method which may be considered is to drip the disperse

⁷ ILS Note – Although we have assumed that this term is plural, the Japanese text does not explicitly state whether multiple spacers are used.



⁶ ILS Note – Alternative translations for this term are "Milori blue" and "navy blue."

system 10 onto or apply the disperse system 10 to each of the penetrating holes 9A after the perforated spacers 9 are formed on one of the transparent electrodes 2; but the dispersion media generally used in the disperse system 10 are easily vaporized, so that when using this method the characteristics of the disperse system 10 change and it is difficult to maintain reproducibility.

(Purpose of the Invention and Constitution)

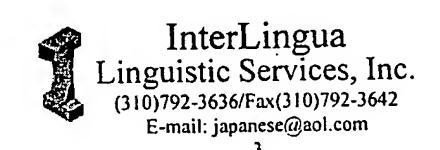
Instead of using the above-described perforated spacers or similar parts, the present invention employs a method in which the disperse system is enclosed in microcapsules in advance. By this means an electrophoretic display device is offered in which the various above-described problems relating to the disperse system filling the space between transparent electrodes are satisfactorily eliminated, the process of inserting the disperse system is simplified, and good-quality electrophoretic display operation, including display of arbitrary colors, can be achieved reliably.

In order to attain this goal, in the electrophoretic display device of the present invention, the space between a pair of opposing electrode plates at least one of which is transparent is filled with a disperse system containing electrophoretic particles, and under the action of a voltage for display control which is applied across said electrodes, the distribution states of the electrophoretic particles within the dispersive system are changed, to alter the optical reflection properties and induce so-called display operation; and in this device are formed numerous microcapsules, which are filled with a dispersive system consisting of a colored dispersion medium in which are dispersed at least one type of electrophoretic particle with optical properties differing from said dispersion medium, with said microcapsules arranged between the abovementioned electrode plates. Here it is desirable that the volume resistivities of the abovementioned dispersive system and the microcapsule film are practically equal.

(Embodiment)

The present invention is explained in further detail below, referring to the embodiment shown in Fig. 1. In the figure, numerous microcapsules 3, each filled in advance by a microcapsule process with a disperse system 5 in which electrophoretic particles 4 are dispersed in a dispersion medium, are placed between the transparent electrodes 2 formed on the opposing surfaces of a pair of transparent sheets consisting of glass sheets or some other material. Here, the electrophoretic particles 4 of the disperse system 5 used to fill the microcapsules 3 may be, in addition to well-known colloidal particles, various other organic or inorganic pigments, dyes, metal powders, glass, resin or other fine powders, as appropriate. As the dispersion medium of the dispersive system 5, in addition to water, alcohols, hydrocarbons and halogenated hydrocarbons, various natural or synthesized hydrocarbons may also be used. To this dispersive system 5 may be added, as necessary, electrolytic materials, surfactants, metal soaps, resins, rubbers, hydrocarbons, varnish, compounds, and other charge-controlling agents consisting of particles, as well as dispersive agents, lubricants, stabilizing agents and other materials. Moreover, in addition to unifying the electric charge on the electrophoretic particles 4 undergoing electrophoresis at positive or negative charges and employing measures to raise the zeta potential or uniformly stabilize the dispersion, the adhesion to the transparent electrodes 2 of the electrophoretic particles 4 or the viscosity or other properties of the dispersion medium may be adjusted as appropriate.

The disperse system 5 with this composition is mixed thoroughly using a ball mill, sand mill, paint shaker or other appropriate means, and then a suitable method, such as interfacial polymerization, insolubilization reaction, phase separation, or interfacial precipitation, is used to enclose the disperse system 5 in microcapsules. Here, it is desirable that the volume resistivities of the film of the microcapsules 3 and the disperse system 5 be for practical purposes the same.



Microcapsules 3 obtained by this means are arranged on one of the transparent electrodes using a roller printing technique, a spray technique or some other method, and this may then be combined with the other transparent electrode 2 to fill the space between the two electrodes 2 with the microcapsules. In addition to the above means of filling the space between the electrodes 2 with the disperse system 5 using microcapsules 3, a method can also be employed in which appropriate filling holes linking the two electrodes are used to inject appropriate quantities of microcapsules 3.

In addition, for practical purposes it is desirable that the gaps between microcapsules 3 and the gaps between electrodes 2 and microcapsules 3 be filled via injection holes 6 with a material 7 which is chemically stable with respect to the microcapsules 3, and has for practical purposes the same refractive index and volume resistivity, as shown in Fig. 1. Here 8 denotes end sealing material.

(Effects of the Invention)

In an electrophoretic display device of the present invention, as has been described, the disperse system is encapsulated in microcapsules in advance, and these microcapsules are arranged in a plane between the electrodes used for display control. Consequently, there are at least the following advantageous results.

Because the composition of the disperse system in microcapsules is maintained to be uniform, coagulation of the electrophoretic particles or adhesion to the electrodes as in devices of the prior art are eliminated, and uniform and stable display operation is possible.

The device is constructed such that microcapsules are arranged between the electrodes used for display control, so that handling of the disperse system and processes for filling the space between the electrodes with the disperse system during assembly can be greatly improved without the need to consider adverse effects on the disperse system, to obtain an electrophoretic display device with satisfactory characteristics.

In encapsulating the disperse systems in microcapsules in advance, it is possible to produce disperse systems with various display colors, and appropriately arrange microcapsules with these different display colors to configure a desired color display; in doing so, no barrier walls or means of partitioning are needed.

4. Brief Explanation of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a conceptual cross-sectional diagram of the main components of an electrophoretic display device provided with microcapsules filled with a disperse system, according to the Embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a conceptual cross-sectional diagram of the main components of an electrophoretic display device of the prior art, provided with perforated spacers; and,

Figure 3 is a partial explanatory isometric diagram of an example of the construction of a perforated spacer.

- 1: Transparent material
- 2: Transparent electrode
- 3: Microcapsule
- 4: Electrophoretic particles
- 5: Disperse system
- 9: Perforated spacer
- 10: Disperse system



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図発明の名称 電気泳動表示装置

> 即特 昭62-244679

> > 修

昭

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四発 明 者 井 上 茨城県稲敷郡茎崎町天宝喜757 日本メクトロン株式会社

南茨城工場内

⑫発 明 多 者 田 隈 茨城県稲敷郡茎崎町天宝喜757 日本メクトロン株式会社

南茨城工場内

7 明 者 森 高

茨城県稲敷郡茎崎町天宝喜757 日本メクトロン株式会社

南茨城工場内

70発 明 者 尚 舞田 之 茨城県稲敷郡茎崎町天宝喜757 日本メクトロン株式会社

南茨城工場内

日本メクトロン株式会 创出 願 人

社

個代 理 人 弁理士 鎌田 秋光 東京都港区芝大門1丁目12番15号

期 細 書

1. 発明の名称

電気泳動表示裝置

2. 特許請求の範囲

- (1) 少なくとも一方が透明な一組の対向電極板間 に電気泳動粒子を含む分散系を封入し、該電極 間に印加した表示制御用電圧の作用下に分散系 内の電気泳動粒子の分布状態を変えることによ って光学的反射特性に変化を与えて所要の表示 動作を行わせるようにした電気泳動表示装置に 於いて、着色した分散媒中に該分散媒と光学的 特性の異なる少なくとも一種類の電気泳動粒子 を分散させた分散系を封入した多数のマイクロ カプセルを設け、これらのマイクロカプセルを 上記電極板関に配装するように構成したことを 特徴とする電気泳動表示装置。
- (2) 上記分散系及びマイクロカプセルの膜の体積 抵抗率を実質上同等に形成するように構成した ことを特徴とする特許額求の範囲第(1)に記載の 電気泳動表示装置。

3. 発明の詳細な説明

「産業上の利用分野」

本発明は、電気泳動粒子を利用した表示装置に 関し、更に詳細に云えば、分散媒中に電気泳動粒 子を分散させた分散系をマイクロカプセルに個々 に封入し、これらのマイクロカプセルを電極板間 に配装するようにした電気泳動表示装置に関する。

「従来技術とその問題点」

電気泳動粒子を使用したこの種の電気泳動表示 装置は、少なくとも一方が透明な対向配置したー 組の電極板間に液体分散媒に電気泳動粒子を分散 させた分散系を封入し、上記電極板の極性に応じ て分散媒中の電気泳動粒子を透明電極板側に吸着 又は離反させるように該極性を制御することによ り、所望の文字、記号成いは図形等を表示できる ように構成されている。分散系に使用される液体 分散媒には、アルコール系溶媒、各種エステル類、 脂肪族炭化水素、脂環式炭化水素、芳香族炭化水 素、ハロゲン化炭化水素又はその他の種々の油等 を単独又は適宜混合したものに界面活性剤などを

適量添加したものを使用できる。また、電気泳動 粒子としては、カーボンブラック、紺脊又はフタ ロシアニングリーン等が一般的なものとして知ら れている。

有孔性スペーサ9を備える電気泳動表示装置では、両透明電極2間に該有孔性スペーサ9を介装

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「実 施 例」

以下、第1図に示す一実施例を参照しながら本発明を更に詳細に説明する。同図に於いて、一組のガラス板等からなる透明部材1の対向面に各々形成された透明電極2の間には、電気泳動粒子4を分散媒中に分散させた分散系5を予めマイクロ

した後、この有孔性スペーサ9に形成された多数の各透孔9Aに分散系10を封入する分散系10の不分散系2に有名に対する分散系である。そびの一様な封入処理は極めて困難である。そ形成とでもの透明電極2に有孔性スペーサ9を形成したため、各透孔9Aに分散系10を簡置して封止するとにあるが、分散系10に一般なな用いる分散線は気化し易い為、このは手法であるとが困難であるという問題がある。

「発明の目的及び構成」

本発明は、上記のような有孔性スペーサなどを使用することなく、分散系を予めマイクロカプセル化する手法を採用することによって、透明電極間に封入した分散系に関連する上記の如き種々の問題点を好適に解消し、分散系封入処理の容易化と任意なカラー表示等を含む良好な電気泳動表示装置を提供するものである。

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カプセル化手法で個々に封入した多数のマイクロ カプセル3を配装するように構成してある。こと で、マイクロカプセル3に封入すべき分散系5の 電気泳動粒子4としては、周知のコロイド粒子の ほか、種々の有機・無機質顔料、染料、金属粉、 ガラス或いは樹脂等の微粉末などを適宜使用でき る。また、分散系5の分散媒には、水、アルコー ル類、炭化水素、ハロゲン化炭化水素等のほか、 天然又は合成の各種の油などを使用できる。この ような分散系5中には、必要に応じて、電解質や 界面活性剤、金属石けん、樹脂、ゴム、油、ワニ ス、コンパウンドなどの粒子からなる荷電制御剤 に加えて分散剤、潤滑剤、安定化剤等を添加でき る。更に、電気泳動を行なう泳動粒子4の荷電を 正又は負に統一したり、ゼータ電位を高める手段 や分散を均一安定化することの他、電気泳動粒子 4の透明電極2に対する吸着性や分散媒の粘度等 の調整を適宜行うてとが出来る。

てのようにして構成される分散系 5 は、ボール ミル、サンドミル、ペイントシェーカ等の適当な 手段で十分に混和した後、界面重合法、不溶化反 応法、相分離法或いは界面沈嚴法などの適宜手法 で分散系 5 をマイクロカプセル化する。この場合、 マイクロカプセル 3 の膜と分散系 5 の体積抵抗率 は実質上同等となるように構成するのが好ましい。

とのようにして得られたマイクロカブセル3は、スクリーン印刷手段、ローラー印刷手段或いはスプレー法などの手法を用いて一方の透明電極2上に整列させた後、他方の透明電極2と組合せて両電極2間に封入することができる。マイクロカブセル3による分散系5の両電極2間に連通する適当な封入孔を用いて所要量のマイクロカブセル3を注入するような手段も採用できる。

また、マイクロカプセル3相互の間隙及び電極 2とマイクロカプセル3との間隙には、マイクロカプセル3に対して化学的に安定であって屈折率 及び体積抵抗率が実質上等しい物質7を第1図の 如く注入孔6を介して満たすように構成するのが 実用上好ましい。なお、8は端部封止材を示す。

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4. 図面の簡単な説明

第1図は本発明の一実施例に従って構成された分散系封入用マイクロカブセルを備えた電気 泳動表示装置の概念的な要部断面構成図、

第2図は有孔性スペーサを具備する従来構造 に従った電気泳動表示装置の概念的な要部断面 構成図、そして、

第3図は有孔性スペーサの構成例の部分斜視 説明図である。

1 : 透 明 部 材

2 : 透 明 電 極

3 : マイクロカプセル

4: 泳 勁 粒子

5 : 分 散 系

有 孔 性スペーサ

10: 分 散 系

「発明の効果」

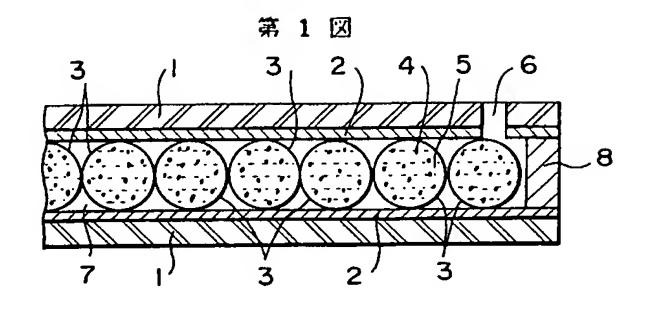
本発明に係る電気泳動表示装置は、上記のとおり、分散系を予めマイクロカブセル化し、このマイクロカブセルを表示制御用電極間に配装するように構成したことを特徴とするので、少なくとも次の効果を奏する。

マイクロカプセル化した分散系の組成は、一様に保持される為、従来の如き電気泳動粒子の凝集 或いは電極に対する付着現象を解消して、均一且 つ安定した表示動作を達成可能である。

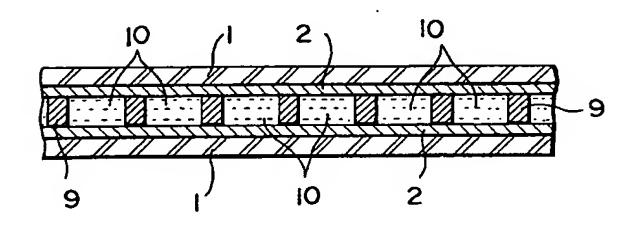
表示制御用電極間にマイクロカブセルを配列する構造を備えるので、組立時等に分散系に悪影響を与えることなく、分散系の取り扱い或いは分散系封入処理を格段に改善して特性の良好な電気泳動表示装置を提供できる。

分散系を予めマイクロカプセル化する際、種々 表示色の異なる分散系を種類毎に製造することが 可能であり、斯かる表示色の異なるマイクロカプ セルを適宜配列して所望のカラー表示を達成でき、 その際、隔壁又は仕切り手段等も不要である。

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第 2 図



第 3 図

